

Minutes
Regular meeting of the City of Reading Planning Commission
July 28, 2015 at 7:00 pm

Members present:

Ermete J. Raffaelli, Chairman
Wayne Jonas Bealer, Vice Chairman
Michael E. Lauter, Secretary
William F. Cinfici, Assistant Secretary

Staff present:

Andrew W. Miller, Planning Office
Deborah A.S. Hoag, Department of Public Works

Others present:

Adam J. Brower, Edward B. Walsh & Associates Inc.
Mark H. Koch, Koch & Koch
Gregg A. Bogia, Bogia Engineering Inc.
Kimberly M. Fasnacht, SSM Group Inc.
Brian P. Kelly, Redesign Reading Community Development Corporation
Michelle A. Katzenmoyer
Carole Duran, Reading Eagle Company

Chairman Raffaelli called the July meeting to order, reminded presenters to sign the attendance sheet, and recognized the lengthy agenda. *[recording stopped at 1:30 in, and with bad time stamps]* Mr. Raffaelli suggested an expedited review of the conditional use applications. Mr. Lauter moved to accept the July 28th agenda. Mr. Cinfici seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to accept the July agenda, as presented.

Subdivision and Land Development:

3150 S.F. Building Addition (Piazza Acura) – final subdivision and land development plan [0:00.00]

Mr. Brower mentioned the ‘sketch’ presentation at the June meeting, since modified and renamed, and acknowledged receiving reviews from both the Planning Office and Public Works Department. He noted that reviews from a few other agencies are forthcoming. He characterized most of the comments as easy to address on a revised plan, but hoped to discuss a few specifics, including the references to a landscaping plan. Asked what the Commission might be looking for, Mr. Raffaelli touted the recent efforts at the neighboring Masano dealerships and along the islands in Hancock Boulevard. He recognized the challenges in areas of existing paving, but hoped to see something complimentary, especially at that corner. Mr. Bealer recited several plans that had been presented within the last few years, for development along Lancaster Avenue, each including additional landscaping and green spaces and having a cumulative effect. He recognized Piazza’s investment and thought they could make a similar contribution to improving the look. He alluded to other ‘commercial highway’ environs, the legacy of a more utilitarian era in design, and suggested containerized plants as a possible consolation where street trees aren’t feasible. Mr. Brower recognized the extent of the efforts at the neighboring dealership, and explained a ‘different philosophy’ in prioritizing the visibility of the inventory. He understood that many municipalities are trying to update the look of their commercial strips, and hoped for some ‘compromise’. He offered to consider it further and return with an offer, expecting that the owner would likely prefer lower-growing varieties of landscaping. Mr. Miller suggested they consider the other projects mentioned, for some possible design cues. Mr. Cinfici noted the use of elevated displays, at the neighboring dealership, as a means of highlighting its offering. Mr. Raffaelli said the angle and intensity of some of the existing site lighting presents a glare to drivers on Hancock Boulevard and asked that they be adjusted. He thought the chimney structure on the northern corner of the Honda building to be excessively high and likely obsolete, thinking it might be addressed as part of the current proposal. Mr. Brower recalled some discussion about eventual modifications at the Honda dealership, but said the current focus is on the addition to the Acura building. He explained that the dealers get their ‘marching orders’ from the manufacturers, and are required to meet the brand’s minimum design standards. He said they could adjust the lights, and possibly some of the other easier requests. Mr. Miller clarified that his written comment about the chimney was seeking a note regarding its height relative to the rest of the building. Mr. Brower expected that could be established by an offset measurement. Mr. Miller thought most of the review comments could be addressed with additional notes and explanations. Mr. Brower agreed, and intended some additional surveying. Mr. Bealer mentioned the requested waiver of the utility information, wondering if it could be resolved by notes, and questioned the developer’s legal counsel about the easement issues. Mr. Koch said they didn’t know of any easements and suspected the City may

not either. Ms. Hoag said they've concluded that a six-foot stormwater sewer runs beneath the Honda building, adding that the section is scheduled for a television inspection. Mr. Koch said they didn't have any objection to depicting such features, and may be able to further determine locations and easements through a title search and any available City documentation. Mr. Brower noted a similar situation at Piazza's Honda dealership in Springfield and wondered how to resolve the matter if no formal easement is found. Mr. Koch said he might have to discuss it with the City Solicitor. Mr. Miller said he did find the ordinance vacating that segment of Gregg Avenue, but without references to specific easements. He understood that at least water and sanitary sewers traversed that section, and said it required further research. He said there may be monitoring wells within the site, as well. Mr. Brower hoped the Commission might still consider a limited waiver from locating everything within Lancaster Avenue, if everything on site was shown. Mr. Miller thought they'd need a clearer picture of how things were arranged and connected before proceeding to act on the request. He asked about the unused 'extra' driveways. Mr. Brower mentioned a prior application to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), complications in permitting a new driveway, and felt the obsolete driveways had more to do with the Honda property. Ms. Hoag counted three driveways on Hancock Boulevard, another five on Lancaster Avenue, and one on either side of Gregg Avenue, wondering if PennDOT had any issues with the opening on Hancock Boulevard closest to the Lancaster Avenue intersection. *[picking up with the second audio file – about 30 minutes lost – where at 1:17.40 left on Part 1 of the BCTV file used to cover the gap]* Mr. Brower thought Piazza would be looking to utilize that driveway again, and make another PennDOT application in the future. Mr. Koch stated that there were no proposed changes to the Lancaster Avenue frontage. Asked for a recommendation, Mr. Miller responded that action should wait. Mr. Brower said they weren't expecting any. Mr. Koch questioned the references to stormwater planning requirements, given that they weren't increasing the impact. Ms. Hoag noted the site exceeds the impervious cover allowed and advised measures that would improve the situation, citing landscaping as an example. She confirmed that a 'narrative' was sufficient to explain the existing arrangements and any mitigation achieved. Mr. Koch referred to another comment regarding the driveways, another 'existing condition'. Ms. Hoag restated her concern with the distance from the intersection. Mr. Brower again predicted a subsequent and more-encompassing plan that covers the Honda parcel. Mr. Miller asked if they'd yet made applications for a zoning permit or the erosion and sedimentation control approval. Mr. Brower said that had been delayed while waiting on checks to cover those fees. Ms. Hoag wondered why they'd proposed the parcel boundaries as they had. Mr. Brower explained that they were trying to better balance the share devoted to each make's display, proposing a shared-access easement. He conceded that, while currently in common ownership, they might not always be. Mr. Miller mentioned the parking on the grass strip within the Gregg Avenue right-of-way. Mr. Brower understood that had to be removed. Mr. Miller returned what he deemed to be an overpayment of the application fee. Mr. Koch expressed his appreciation for the dialogue and the opportunity to discuss the reviews.

Mr. Bealer moved to table the final Piazza plan. Mr. Cinfici seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to table the '3150 S.F. Building Addition at 1001 Lancaster Avenue' final plan.

Hydrojet, Inc. – revision-to-record land development plan [0:11.16]

Mr. Bogia recalled the site's background, from the cleanup of the former American Chain & Cable and transition to what has become a successful industrial center. He mentioned the earlier approvals, in 2007, for this defense-industry company specializing in machining with a water jet. He said the expansion includes another 14 off-street parking spaces and a relocation (to the west) of a stormwater basin, intending to keep it appropriately separated from an environmentally-restricted area on an adjacent parcel. He said the erosion and sedimentation control plan had been submitted, but not yet approved, adding that he was still waiting on the County Planning Commission and the Public Works Department reviews. He said the owner hoped to start in September. He thought sanitary sewer permitting was unnecessary, given the prior approvals, and noted a question about industrial discharges. He understood the company to use a centrifuge to separate contaminants from the process water before reusing it. Mr. Miller said he was looking for notes on the current usage and arrangements, and any changes expected. Mr. Bogia intended to have his staff correspond directly with the City's about the necessary revisions, and said he wasn't yet expecting an approval. He said the addition will match the exterior of the manufacturing part of the existing building. Asked if there were any issues or concerns with the proximity to the restricted area, he said not. Mr. Miller noted a boundary line appearing differently than it had on the 2007 plan, wondering if anything changed. Mr. Bogia said it would be corrected on a revised submission. Mr. Bealer recognized some of the proposed parking spaces appearing within the minimum setback. Mr. Miller noted that some of the restrictions on setbacks had been eased with the 2010 revisions to the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Cinfici asked for some clarification of the overhead electric lines. Mr. Bealer wondered about potential issues stemming from the still-undeveloped third lot. Mr. Bogia didn't know of any, and said the owner has been happy with the more efficient operation that came with the new building. He wasn't sure what other operations and equipment may have been left behind at their South 7th Street facility. Asked about the landscaping, removed and added, he said they'd continue the pattern and

varieties in the extended parking area, but for a possible substitution of the Norway maples. Mr. Miller asked if they anticipated any hardships with the projected two-year Buttonwood Street Bridge closure. Mr. Bogia thought not, as long as the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) maintains the alternate routes by its staggered approach to the upcoming projects. Mr. Miller asked if there had been any further discussion about closing the stub street on the northern line of Buttonwood Street, and filling it in for the grading benefit of the third lot. Mr. Bogia explained that would wait until a tenant was identified and, then, would likely only be necessary for a building of over 25,000 square feet. Mr. Miller characterized his review as the usual requests for corrections or additional information, but advised tabling the plan pending the required permits and reviews.

Mr. Lauter moved to table the 'Hydrojet, Inc.' plan. Mr. Bealer seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to table Hydrojet's revision plan.

Mr. Bogia hoped to have the Public Works Department comments in-time to make revisions for the August meeting. A brief discussion followed regarding another Bogia Engineering project underway at 3500 North 5th Street Highway in Muhlenberg Township.

Aramark Parking Lot – parking lot land development plan [0:30.58]

Ms. Fasnacht reported that Aramark's representatives were again unavailable to attend. She said the plan shows the same basic layout as was presented in June, with some information added in response to the staff reviews. She noted that the zoning permit requires the addition of a bicycle rack, which she expected would be placed on the opposite side of Blair Avenue in front of the Aramark building. She said the designated accessible spaces will be shifted toward the southern corner of the parking lot with a pedestrian access to/from the sidewalk. This will allow them to meet the slope requirements of the accessibility-design standards. Mr. Bealer again raised the concern for the potential of exiting traffic, toward Schuylkill Avenue, to queue across and block the westbound lane of Blair Avenue, wondering how that might be discouraged. Ms. Fasnacht suggested some form of signage within the parking lot, unsure how else it might be regulated. Mr. Bealer agreed it would likely be difficult to enforce, and suggested some kind of communication from the management. Ms. Fasnacht agreed to convey that recommendation. She further agreed to remove the on-street 'safety employee of the month' parking reservation designated by signage on the building side of Blair Avenue, responding to a comment in the Public Works Department review. Mr. Miller confirmed that the zoning permit was issued late that day, and recommend an approval based on the usual conditions.

Mr. Bealer moved to grant final approval to the 'Aramark Parking Lot' plan, conditioned on its meeting the remaining points of the Planning Office and Public Works Department reviews. Mr. Lauter seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to conditionally approve the Aramark parking lot at 1100 Schuylkill Avenue.

Resolution #33-2015

Other business:

§303.a.1 review-Reading Bicycle Pump Track (Reading Bike Hub) [0:39.52]

Mr. Kelly noted the 'conceptual' status of the plan, intending to return with an 'engineered' plan as it is developed. He alluded to the information distributed in advance, and similar materials that were presented to the Reading Redevelopment Authority as it concerns their vacant properties at 924, 926 and 928 Penn Street. He said the lots extend from Penn Street to Cherry Street, and sit opposite another park at the intersection of Cherry Street and Orange Street. He explained that the effort arose from the Sustainable Tools for Assessing and Rating (STAR) community assessment, which advocates temporary uses of vacant land to benefit their communities until such time as they may be redeveloped with more-permanent occupancies. He proposed a community garden in the front part (Penn Street side) of the lots and a bicycle pump track toward the rear (Cherry Street side), describing the latter as a compacted dirt course where riders can develop agility and balance. He said the design is not intended for tricks as might be the case with a 'half pipe' or similar installation. He reported receiving the Redevelopment Authority's approval earlier that month, and hoped to move ahead to the design phase with the Planning Commission's blessing. Among the terms of the lease is a requirement to vacate the premises on as little as 30 days' notice.

Mr. Cinfici noted the recent addition of a mural to the property and asked if there were any plans for the Authority's vacant building at the adjacent 932 Penn Street. Mr. Kelly wasn't certain, but thought the Authority might have a tenant in-mind. Mr. Lauter, speaking from some personal experience, recalled some prior discussion of its restoration, noting the unique 'Exotic Oriental Revival' detailing of the façade, but interest having waned as the costs became clearer. He wasn't sure where that initiative stood currently, and expected the building's condition to have only worsened. Mr. Cinfici asked if the property would remain open and allow travel between Penn and Cherry Streets. Mr. Kelly said that detail had yet to be determined, deferring to the fencing and security preferences of the Redevelopment Authority. Asked if the Berks Conservancy was playing any part, he said they weren't

directly involved, but were consulted, noting that they already manage several of their own community gardens. Told that its continuing maintenance is the principal concern, he described his approach as somewhat different than the Conservancy's model, whereas a volunteer group has already expressed its interest in handling the garden, with a possible role for the 10th & Penn Elementary School.

Mr. Cinfici asked about the expected use of the pump track by skateboarders, and any policies covering it. Mr. Kelly recognized their tendency to exploit certain venues and the difficulty in restricting access. He wasn't sure how that would be handled. Asked if there were any elements of paving or hardscaping that would make that more likely, he said it would be limited to 'compacted soils'. Questioned about the means of that compaction and stabilization, he said it would depend on the specific design and the topography of the site. He confirmed it would involve the import of fill, and likely erosion-control permitting. He said they'd already 'leveraged' clean fill from a regional mining operation, but required further consideration of its characteristics and quantity as sufficient for a pump track. He estimated a volume equivalent to '15 to 20 tri-axle' dump truckloads; an early estimate based on comparison with another site. Mr. Miller wondered if that effort was something to consider before such time as they may be required to vacate the site, in case that material could not be used in the grading for whatever would follow. Asked about the areas of existing paving, Mr. Kelly said they'd be forming the track over it. Mr. Cinfici asked about the approvals and experience with the Philadelphia project. Mr. Kelly said it was part of the Fairmount Park system (at 53rd & Parkside Avenue) and includes 'programming'. He said that, while that site is considered a permanent feature, the Penn Street site is being designed as a temporary use, should be relatively cheap to build and might stimulate interest in a more-permanent venture in the future. Mr. Bealer considered the need for certain permits. Mr. Miller understood the Zoning Office had already determined it a 'by-right' use, as it would be a playground. He thought it sufficient for the Planning Commission to review it from a Comprehensive Plan 'consistency' perspective, though several land development-type issues must still be examined. Mr. Bealer suggested the City might want to seek its own agreement regarding the understanding of maintenance responsibilities. He noted the narrative's mention of 'younger riders' and asked about any policy implications. Mr. Kelly said they may design different sections for different levels. Mr. Bealer, speaking from his position on the Blighted Property Review Committee and noting its determination on these parcels, suggested a presentation and review of its status at an August 20th meeting. He expected the Review Committee would be interested in exploring other 'temporary' opportunities. Mr. Lauter raised the matter of liability. Mr. Kelly described that as another complication yet to be resolved, but already discussed with Redevelopment Authority. He said that Redesign Reading Community Development Corporation, as a nonprofit, had its own concerns and was discussing the matter with its insurance carrier. He considered it to be a liability for the Redevelopment Authority in its current state, and likely more dangerous than their project would present. Mr. Miller wondered if the track would be covered under the statutory 'recreational use' protections or, as a constructed feature, not. Asked about the 'hours of operation', Mr. Kelly mentioned some participation and oversight by the St. James Chapel Church, on South Ninth Street, and speculated on possible 'dawn-to-dusk' restrictions by signage. He thought many of the Commission's questions might be resolved in the design phase and ahead of a future presentation.

Asked about water availability for the garden, Mr. Kelly mentioned a possible agreement with a nearby restaurant. Mr. Lauter thought the 30-days-to-vacate provision seemed the biggest challenge to the success of the garden, considering the interest and enthusiasm in an effort that might be interrupted mid-season. Mr. Kelly acknowledged that risk, but thought it worthwhile, and expected that their more-organized arrangement for its management would prevent some of the commitment issues observed in the existing garden projects where individual plots are demised. He said that policy is still being developed and hoped for the Church's assistance.

Mr. Cinfici wondered about restrictions on motorized vehicles. Mr. Kelly intended to prohibit them, suggesting fencing with opening widths designed to restrict their passage. Mr. Miller recalled the Schuylkill River Greenway Association's challenge with the same on the River Trail, where the spacing of bollards had the unintended consequence of restricting certain wheelchair designs. Mr. Kelly said they had consulted the Wyomissing-based IM Able Foundation regarding designs and signage. He mentioned having raised the necessary funds for the pump track, but still seeking commitments for the garden. Ms. Hoag mentioned the post-construction stormwater concerns that wouldn't necessarily be covered in the erosion-control permitting. Mr. Kelly thought that would be covered in the design engineering, for now looking for the Commission's 'go ahead' toward that phase. Mr. Cinfici assumed that, even if the track surface was appropriately compacted and durable, dust may still be an issue. Mr. Kelly committed to a daily monitoring check, covering the track condition and any on-site debris, and the keeping of a maintenance log. Mr. Lauter asked if they'd determined any maximum time frame, other than a potential sale of the property sale. Mr. Kelly replied that they hadn't considered it that way, and that the Redevelopment Authority just wanted the flexibility. He hoped the interest shown might demonstrate the feasibility of another more-permanent facility elsewhere. Mr. Miller asked about any case studies considering the longer-range costs, in damage and other maintenance. Mr. Kelly didn't know of any, but cited the low start-up costs making it attractive as a temporary use. He added that the International Mountain Bicycling Association helps with the

planning and resources, and described the required maintenance as preventative and cheap. Mr. Raffaelli suggested some kind of portable toilet facilities. Trash and recycling containers were also recommended. Asked more about the ages of the riders anticipated, Mr. Kelly described some complications in serving two distinct audiences – younger riders, having fun, and more-experienced riders honing skills – and the limited space available for addressing both. He said the Berks Area Mountain Biking Association is pursuing a ‘ride center’ designation, and identified the pump track as a missing element. He hoped for a design serving the different levels, and thought the interconnecting loops evident in other designs might achieve that. Asked about an appropriate action, Mr. Miller suggested a statement of consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, which he said makes several references to expanding recreational opportunities and the organizations that can provide them. He said he could then provide documentation for inclusion in any funding and permitting applications pursued.

Mr. Lauter moved to state that the concept of the Reading Bicycle Pump Track is consistent with the City’s Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Cinfici seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to determine the Pump Track consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Resolution #34-2015

Mr. Kelly wondered about the ‘next steps’. Mr. Miller advised pursuing the zoning permit and returning with a more-detailed presentation as the design is developed and answers to the Commission’s questions become available.

Mr. Miller reported that some expected documentation regarding an addition at the Children’s Home of Reading, specifically its ‘Pear Street Cottage’ (not included in the formal agenda), was never received and, so, his intended recommendation for a land-development waiver would have to wait.

117 Marion Street, off-street parking and annexation – waiver consideration [1:29.26]

[note: the land surveyor responsible for the plan had titled it ‘1200 Center Avenue’ – a misidentification of the parcel and misspelling of the street name] Mr. Miller described the project, designed to fall just short of the threshold requiring the Planning Commission’s review, but involving some deed issues stemming from the proposed annexation of 1220 Centre Avenue and 117 Marion Street. He recommended a waiver, based on the usual condition of a plan for the file, specifying, among other notes, a clarification of the parcels involved. He explained that the plan preparer insists on titling it ‘1200 Center Avenue’, a corner property not involved in the project but in common ownership. He noted that he prefers references to the addresses as assigned by the Berks County Mapping Office, even if Marion Street is not ‘open’ in that block. He added that he was satisfied with a proofreading of the draft legal description. Mr. Bealer mentioned another nearby parking lot in use by the same businesses, unknown to the Zoning and Planning staff. He said only two handicapped-reserved parking spaces were available on-site and suggested more, given the use and the demand he’d personally observed. He counted three separate operations within the building at 1220 Centre Avenue: the Sotomayor Medical Practice, the Reading Discount Pharmacy and the Mercy Diagnostics service center. Asked how/if the different businesses were affiliated, he wasn’t certain, but assumed the Pharmacy and Mercy Diagnostics to compliment the Medical Practice, even if operated by another company. Mr. Miller said the background was helpful, but didn’t change his classification of the plan or recommendation to waive the land development process. He wondered what they were planning to do with the corner properties (1200 and 1214 Centre Avenue). Mr. Bealer added that the spaces are not allocated to the businesses individually, and said it’s used to the point that parking occurs along the building, making it difficult to enter and exit the lot. Mr. Miller appreciated the first-hand account and intended to discuss it with the Zoning Office. Turning to the off-site parking, Mr. Bealer described a small, unfinished lot a half-block to the north, under a billboard – at 1301, 1309 and 1317 North Front Street – signed and reserved for the Sotomayor Medical Practice. He assumed its use to be mostly that of employees, though he’d parked there himself when the on-site demand made it necessary. Mr. Miller assumed the overflow to be motivating the proposed expansion. He repeated his recommendation for a waiver, on the conditions that the newly-revealed information be addressed in the context of the plan.

Mr. Lauter moved to waive the formal land-development procedures on the conditions that the plan clarify the addresses of the parcels included, note the zoning and Conservation District permitting, and address the off-site parking arrangements at 1301, 1309 and 1317 North Front Street. Mr. Cinfici seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to so waive the full land-development planning requirements for the parking expansion at 117 Marion Street.

Resolution #35-2015

§303.a.1 review-the Angelica Park parking lot reconstruction (Berks Conservancy) [1:44.25]

Mr. Miller said the Conservancy’s site plan didn’t give much detail on the extent of the project, but that the Public Works Department described it as being limited to a resurfacing of the parking area and some other

enhancements, like waste receptacles. He cautioned that the site plan also shows the footprint of an anticipated proposal to expand the 'boathouse' building that since 2010 has served as the Conservancy's 'environmental exploration center'. He said that project is not a part of the present request. Mr. Bealer said he just wanted to assure any projects are consistent with what Alvernia University had shown a year earlier regarding the reconstruction of Saint Bernardine Street. Mr. Miller agreed, unsure where that effort stood. He said the Conservancy was looking for a statement vis-à-vis the Comprehensive Plan, and at the last minute. He relied on the Public Works Department's representation of its scope and consistency with formal agreements between the City and the Conservancy. He noted new lighting and stormwater infiltration trenches are also proposed.

Mr. Bealer moved to find the Angelica Park parking lot reconstruction consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, authorizing the Planning Office staff to prepare a letter so documenting. Mr. Cinfici seconded. Mr. Miller clarified that the statement was limited to the parking area and not the environmental center addition depicted in the Conservancy's site plan. And the Commission voted unanimously to determine the Berks Conservancy's improvements to the Angelica Park parking lot consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Resolution #36-2015

§603.c.2 conditional use review-845 North 8th Street (conversion) [1:49.09]

Mr. Raffaelli hoped to move through the conditional-use reviews a little faster, and began polling the members individually. He understood the application to involve two separate buildings with units already existing, and in violation. He felt the proposal too dense, and therefore at odds with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. He thought the Little Cedar Street building should be demolished. Mr. Cinfici wasn't sure from the application whether it involved one or two buildings and preferred floor plans. Mr. Miller said he'd received a report from the Zoning Administrator, just before the meeting, which refers to an 841 North 8th Street, also owned by the applicant. He said the Zoning Administrator is recommending approval, if 841 and 845 are combined, and if a subsequent parking plan includes two spaces dedicated to the commercial use. He said there appeared to be much more to the Zoning Administrator's narrative, and offered to read it aloud. Mr. Raffaelli remarked on the commercial occupancy as another matter clouding the applicant's intent. Ms. Hoag wondered if the application itself was considered 'complete'. Mr. Raffaelli wanted the measures of square footage for the units proposed. Mr. Cinfici suspected there might be additional documentation not included in the materials distributed (the Zoning Office would later provide the floor plan). Mr. Miller answered that only the Zoning Administrator's comments had been received since he'd delivered the meeting packets. He again cited the limitations in the application form for gathering all the relevant information. Mr. Bealer suggested the application should be completed and resubmitted. Mr. Lauter expressed some confusion over the actual number of units proposed, depending on how one reads and interprets the application. He noted that five off-street parking spaces were said to be available, addressing what has typically been among the Commission's bigger concerns. Mr. Cinfici had his own uncertainties on the total number of units requested, based on the answers given in the application. Mr. Lauter noted that what is called '847 North 8th Street' is counted as Unit No. 3, and '842 Little Cedar Street' as Unit No. 4, and interpreted two units existing with another two proposed. Mr. Raffaelli referred to a comment about a 'suspected' unit in the basement. Mr. Miller said there were two or three separate properties at issue. Mr. Raffaelli noted that the first floor is proposed as a beauty salon and the remainder as two dwelling units. Mr. Bealer expected additional building-code complications if the 'mixed use' was allowed. Mr. Lauter agreed it should be denied, if for no other reasons than the confusion in the proposal and incomplete application.

Mr. Lauter moved to recommend that City Council deny the conversion due to the lack of detail in the application, namely a lack of floor plans. Mr. Bealer seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to recommend that City Council deny the additional units at 845 North 8th Street.

Resolution #37-2015

§603.c.2 conditional use review-508 North 9th Street (conversion) [2:07.05]

Mr. Raffaelli made some comments regarding the floor plans. Mr. Lauter recalled having considered a prior application for the property (at the February 14, 2006 meeting). Mr. Bealer noted its position next to a vacant lot owned by the Electric Repair Company, and remembered the Commission recommending approval, before City Council denied it (their Resolution No. 67-2006). He noted that it is a large building, and that they had been seeking five units. Reviewing the notes, Mr. Miller said that the 2006 appeal came from the previous owner, and was denied on the basis of insufficient parking. He said a subsequent effort was taken through the Zoning Hearing Board, with some adjustment in the requested number of units. Mr. Lauter thought the current request, for three units, that much more reasonable. Mr. Miller reported that the Zoning Administrator recommends approval on the conditions that one unit remain 'owner occupied', that a landscaping plan be provided and that they designate one on-site parking space for each unit. He questioned the condition of the owner occupancy. Mr. Cinfici noted the application describing a garage not shown on the plan. Mr. Bealer thought the conditions laid out by the Zoning Administrator

to be appropriate, except for the owner occupancy. Mr. Miller thought that might be difficult to enforce, but wondered if it might withstand a challenge as a situation where the City is offering ordinance relief in exchange for it. He added that an approval would also imply a parking variance. Mr. Cinfici wondered how such an occupancy condition would be applied to subsequent owners of the property.

Mr. Bealer to recommend City Council's approval of the one-to-three unit conversion of 508 North 9th Street, based on the conditions advised by the Zoning Administrator, and noting the Commission's concerns in requiring owner occupancy. Mr. Lauter seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to recommend that City Council approve the additional units at 508 North 9th Street.

Resolution #38-2015

§603.c.2 conditional use review-549 North 10th Street (conversion) [2:19.53]

Mr. Miller recalled the previous consideration of this property (at the March 23, 2010 meeting), later denied by City Council (Resolution No. 42-2010) when information conflicting with the application was clarified at the hearing. Mr. Raffaelli cited the density as a concern, as well as the required parking being proposed two blocks distant (at 601 North 12th Street), doubting it would be used when on-street spaces are found to be available closer to the building. Mr. Bealer related his own experience whenever arriving home in the later hours. He noted an error on the floor plans where two different units are labeled as 'Apartment #3'. Reading from a summary provided, Mr. Miller said the applicant requests an increase of four units, from two to six. Mr. Lauter noted that two of the proposed units fall short of the minimum floor area. Mr. Miller read that the Zoning Administrator recommends approval based on conditions related to inspections and code compliance, measures required whether or not specified in the decision. Mr. Cinfici agreed with the concerns on the remote parking, and the apparent differences between the terms of its lease (month to month) and that of the apartments themselves (yearly). He added that the issue of subletting didn't seem to be covered. Ms. Hoag considered the scenario of the parking lot's owner selling the property or any other event rendering the leased parking unavailable. Mr. Bealer complimented the quality of the floor plans, suggesting the applicant was at least aware of what would be required from a building-code perspective. Mr. Miller reminded the Commission that they weren't required to issue a recommendation, and intended to have the minutes drafted by the time of the hearing, that he'd be able to convey the concerns whether or not made part of the formal communication. He noted that new information is often revealed at those hearings, where the applicant is present and testifying, and often include things that may have changed the Commission's position. He admitted the current application and process weren't working as well as it could.

Mr. Bealer moved to recommend City Council's approval of the two-to-four unit conversion of 549 North 10th Street, while noting the Commission's concerns with the off-site parking arrangements and the terms of its lease. Mr. Lauter seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to recommend that City Council approve the additional units at 549 North 10th Street.

Resolution #39-2015

§513.a approval reaffirmation-DoubleTree Hotel Project [2:32.25]

Mr. Miller said he had the record version of the plan for the Commission's *tentative* endorsement. He said he still had to discuss it further with the Public Works Department before releasing it. He said he simply needed the Commission to reaffirm its March 24th approval because of the time elapsed.

Mr. Bealer moved to reaffirm the March revision plan approval for the DoubleTree Hotel Project. Mr. Cinfici seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to reaffirm their March 24th plan approval, Resolution No. 14-2015, for the 'DoubleTree Hotel Project' revision-to-record land development plan.

Resolution #40-2015

§302.a review-draft comprehensive plan public meeting [2:34.10]

Referring to the presentation made at the June 23rd meeting and a request for a formal statement, Mr. Miller suggested making a recommendation that refers to the coverage of their discussion in the meeting minutes, rather than attempting to craft a motion summarizing it. Mr. Cinfici said it wasn't clear which of the Commission's requested edits were made, and that there wasn't time available to review it as thoroughly as they had the previous draft. Mr. Lauter reported that the steering committee had met again following the Planning Commission's meeting, and additional changes were requested then. Mr. Bealer, scanning the text, recognized that at least a couple specifically-requested changes had been made, and agreed that the minutes would be the best summary. Mr. Cinfici said he'd thought of additional comments since the June meeting, among them the coordinated timing of traffic signals and, with regard to the goal of increasing tree canopy cover, policies concerning the responsibilities for tree pruning and management. Mr. Miller thought that the Shade Tree Commission might again be wrestling with the conundrum of City-versus-landowner responsibility for street trees, balancing the budget realities against the practicality of treating it as a homeowner's province. Mr. Cinfici felt the safety consideration to be paramount. He

questioned the effect of invasive species, plant and animal, the regulating authorities and efforts at mitigation. Mr. Miller noted that the perceived threat of invasives had been somewhat subjective, at least in terms of trees. He said what have long been considered appropriate varieties, based on their tolerance of urban conditions, are nonetheless invasive and under closer scrutiny where they've been observed as outcompeting and displacing the native varieties. He said the approved list changes regularly, often in response to emerging pests. Mr. Raffaelli thought those issues might be best left to other regulating documents. Turning back to the traffic signal issues, Ms. Hoag reminded that all signalized intersections are regulated by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, whether or not on one of its designated routes. She said certain corridors are supposed to be coordinated, and might be identified within the plan. The members recalled prior grants funding the study and coordination of those corridors, and considered how those goals might conflict with the 'traffic-calming' and 'shared-street' goals already expressed within the draft.

Mr. Bealer moved to recommend that City Council consider the Planning Commission's input on the draft comprehensive plan, as summarized in its June and forthcoming July meeting minutes. Mr. Cinfici seconded, and complimented the overall quality of the draft plan. Mr. Lauter noted the extensive effort in its preparation, even as it felt hurried to meet a deadline, and suggested that it should have involved the planning staff that is expected to consider and implement its policies. Mr. Raffaelli said the steering committee relied on the consultant's model for the focus and expedience. Mr. Lauter observed that the County's planning staff was represented but not the City's. Mr. Miller suggested that his exclusion wasn't accidental, but appreciated the acknowledgement. And the Commission voted unanimously to recommend that City Council review the Commission's meeting minutes as the record of its review.

Resolution #41-2015

review the draft June 23, 2015 meeting minutes [3:01.46]

Mr. Bealer said he had a few grammatical corrections, offering to forward them by email. Mr. Lauter moved to accept the June minutes, as may be revised. Mr. Cinfici seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to accept the edited June 23rd meeting minutes.

Resolution #42-2015

Mr. Cinfici moved to adjourn the July meeting. Mr. Lauter seconded. And the Commission adjourned the July 28th meeting. – 10:35p